

REMARKS/DISCUSSION OF ISSUES

Applicants note that this is the fourth non-final office action, and Applicants have not entered any claim amendments.

Claims 1-22. Claims 1-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over *Frye* in view of *Helzerman*. Applicants respond to this rejection as subsequently recited herein, and respectfully request reconsideration and further examination of the present application under 37 CFR § 1.112. The rejection of claims 1-22 is traversed.

To warrant this §103(a) rejection of pending claims 1-22, *Frye* in view of *Helzerman* must teach or suggest each and every limitation of claims 1-22 in as complete detail as is contained in claims 1-22. See, MPEP §2131. *Frye* in view of *Helzerman* does not teach, and in fact, teaches away from the claimed terms “determining a readiness category for the decision maker” and “providing a readiness category rating for the readiness category” as recited in claims 1, 9, and 16.

The Examiner has correctly withdrawn the anticipation rejection over *Frye*, but erroneously applies *Helzerman* in a failed attempt to save the rejection. *Helzerman* does not cure the defects of *Frye*.

Specifically, the Examiner cites to column 4, lines 22-49 for such a teaching, but no such teaching can be found. At most, *Helzerman* teaches that project leaders and managers next select or identify a ‘lead’ technology group for each identified customer need. The ‘output’ of this step is the assignment for concept proposals development. *Helzerman does not teach* determining a readiness category for the decision maker.

Notably, the readiness category is claimed as for the decision maker, rather than for the project itself. Thus, actual progress of the project is not addressed in this particular claim limitation, and the readiness category is for the decision maker.

With respect to claims 2, 10, and 17, *Frye* in view of *Helzerman* does not teach or suggest “assigning vote weighting to the decision maker.” The Examiner correctly notes the failure of *Frye* to teach such a claim element, but the Examiner’s citation to column 2 lines 48-63 and column 4 lines 41-64 of *Helzerman* is misplaced. *Helzerman* does not disclose the claimed element. At most, *Helzerman* teaches a decision maker, but does not teach or suggest that the decision maker should have vote weighting.

Further, claims 2-8, 10-15, and 17-22 depend directly or indirectly from claims 1, 9, or 16 respectively, and are therefore patentable over the prior art for at least the same reasons.

Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-22 under U.S.C. §103(a) is therefore respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

The Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-22 as listed herein fully satisfy the requirements of 35 U.S.C. §§102, 103 and 112. In view of the foregoing, favorable consideration and early passage to issue of the present application is respectfully requested.

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Respectfully Submitted,
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